

THE BUDDHISM OF THE SUN: ILLUMINATING THE WORLD

[1] "On Reprimanding Hachiman"

The Westward Transmission of Buddhism—Striving With a Selfless Vow for the Happiness of All Humanity

—General References—

go to www.nichirenlibrary.org to access:

- *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vols. 1 & 2
- *The Soka Gakkai Dictionary of Buddhism*
- *The Lotus Sutra and Its Opening and Closing Sutras*
- *The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings*

HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR THIS LECTURE

1. *The World of Nichiren Daishonin's Writings* (WNDW), vol. 2, pp. 45–95 (background) & vol. 4, pp. 1–42 (westward transmission)
2. Map of the spread of Buddhism (attached)
3. *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, vol. 5, pp. 90–115 (Bodhisattva Never Disparaging)

BACKGROUND HIGHLIGHTS

- This letter "On Reprimanding Hachiman" was written in December 1280 from Minobu, roughly a month after the Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine in Kamakura had burned down. At the same time, Japan faced the threat of a second Mongol invasion.
- Nichiren reprimands the Great Bodhisattva Hachiman, who was regarded as a protector deity of the Kamakura military government. Hachiman was believed to have vowed before Shakyamuni to protect those who uphold the Lotus Sutra, but he had failed to protect the Lotus Sutra and its votary, Nichiren, and failed to punish the Kamakura authorities for persecuting Nichiren. Because of this, Nichiren explains, the major Buddhist gods punished Hachiman by burning the shrine dedicated to him in Kamakura.
- A prime example of Hachiman failing to protect the votary occurred in 1271, when Nichiren was arrested for propagating Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. As authorities led him through Kamakura to the front of Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine, Nichiren boldly admonished Hachiman, stating: "Great Bodhisattva Hachiman, are you truly a god?" (see full admonition of Hachiman in "The Actions of the Votary of the Lotus Sutra," WND-1, 766–67.)
- See also WNDW, vol. 2, pp. 77–82; and WNDW, vol. 4, p. 12 (note: in this series, "On Reprimanding Hachiman" is referred to as its former title "Remonstrance With Bodhisattva Hachiman")

TERMS

- The three periods of the Former Day, Middle Day and Latter Day of the Law (see "three periods" in *The Soka Gakkai Dictionary of Buddhism*; Nichirenlibrary.org)
- The westward transmission of Buddhism (see notes under Key Passage #1)

KEY PASSAGE #1:

The Land of the Moon is another name for India, the place where the Buddha made his appearance in the world. The Land of the Sun is another name for Japan. Is there any reason why a sage should not appear here? (WND-2, 936)

See LB, pp. 28–29.

See attached map of how Buddhism spread from India to Japan, titled "Spread of Buddhism" (also found in Appendix M, WND-1, 1198, or Nichirenlibrary.org)

- Note: With Pataliputra as the starting point, the arrows moving south to Ceylon and southern Asia were the primary routes of Theravada (Hinayana) Buddhism. The arrows moving north to Kashmir and then east to China, Korea and Japan indicate the propagation of mostly Mahayana Buddhism.

BASIC POINTERS FOR PREPARING A LECTURE ON THE WRITINGS

- Read the writing several times through.
- Read the lecture on the writing several times through.
- Create a concise explanation of the background:
 - when the letter was written, conditions of society and Nichiren's life at the time, the intent in composing the writing, etc.
- Make note of the title of the lecture—often the key message is conveyed in the title.
- Make note of the opening section(s) of the lecture—the key points are often included in the opening.
- Are there terms or concepts that need explanation?
- What are some key portions of the Gosho passage to emphasize?
- How do these key portions and correlating points connect to our lives today?
- What points do you want members to go home with?

NOTE: This is not intended as a prepared lecture. This only serves as a supporting reference for lecturers.

- Nichiren predicted that his teaching would flow from Japan toward the west, returning to the countries through which Buddhism had originally been transmitted and spreading throughout the entire world.
- **SGI President Ikeda:** “The moon illuminates the darkness of night, but it does not completely dispel the darkness and bring the dawn as the sun does. This difference in brightness is decisive. Nichiren Buddhism, which dispels even the fundamental darkness arising from delusion and slander of the Law, undoubtedly has the brightness of the sun. The Lotus Sutra [of Shakyamuni], while declaring that it illuminates the darkness of fundamental ignorance, has not in fact illuminated the darkness of the Latter Day. Reading the Lotus Sutra with his life by enduring persecution and spreading the Mystic Law [the teaching hidden in the depths of the Lotus Sutra] with ungrudging devotion, the Daishonin confirmed his mission as Bodhisattva Superior Practices, leader of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, who dispels the darkness of fundamental delusion.” (WNDW, vol. 4, p. 21)

KEY PASSAGE #2

The light of the moon is not very bright, for the Buddha taught [the Lotus Sutra in India] for only eight years of his life. But the light of the sun is brilliant, outshining the moon, an auspicious sign of how the Buddhism of Japan is destined to illuminate the long darkness of [the Latter Day of the Law, which begins with] the fifth five-hundred-year period. (WND-2, 936)

See LB, pp. 31–32

- **President Ikeda:** “Both the sun and moon are symbols of the Lotus Sutra, alike in intent and both embodying the wish to bring enlightenment to all living beings of the saha world.” (LB, p. 31)
- **President Ikeda:** “The westward transmission of Buddhism refers to a revitalization of Buddhist humanism to nourish the hearts of all people for eternity.” (LB, p. 32)

KEY PASSAGE #3

In the Latter Day of the Law the formidable enemies of the single vehicle [the Lotus Sutra] are everywhere in sight. Now is the time to benefit the world in the same manner as Bodhisattva Never Disparaging. You who are my disciples, each of you should work diligently at this, work diligently at this! (WND-2, 936)

See LB, p. 32

- “Formidable enemies of the single vehicle” means those who slander and reject the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. It points to the ignorance that keeps people from believing in the limitless potential of their lives. (see LB, p. 32)
- “Benefit the world in the same manner as Bodhisattva Never Disparaging”: Though attacked verbally and physically, this bodhisattva helped his persecutors form a connection with Buddhism, and in the end led them to enlightenment. (see LB, p. 32)
- He also wisely avoided violence by running out of harm’s way and declaring: “I would never dare disparage you, for you are all certain to attain Buddhahood!” (LSOC, 309).
- **President Ikeda:** “The Daishonin was enlightened to the Mystic Law within his own life, the Law that has the power to break through the fundamental darkness in people’s lives characterized by ignorance and slander of the Law . . . all who struggle for kosen-rufu in the Latter Day of the Law with the same mind and spirit as the Daishonin are Bodhisattvas of the Earth; they are suns and lotus flowers” (WNDW, vol. 4, pp. 30–31).
- **President Ikeda:** “Teaching others about the Mystic Law is a struggle against the fundamental disrespect for life and lack of faith in humanity that are the essence of slander of the Lotus Sutra. Doing so is the ultimate practice of compassion, arising from a commitment to eliminate the primary cause of suffering” (see LB, p. 32).
- **President Ikeda:** “Bodhisattva Never Disparaging was not an eloquent speaker. He did not put on an air of greatness. He merely traveled around planting the seed of the Lotus Sutra in people’s hearts . . . this is the behavior of SGI members. Those struggling in the forefront of our movement are themselves Bodhisattva Never Disparaging” (*The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, vol. 5, p. 103).

See LB, pp. 35–36

- Three significant points marking the new era of worldwide kosen-rufu: First, the awareness of being Bodhisattvas of the Earth has spread throughout our global membership. Second, SGI members are building networks based on humanism. Third, our SGI movement is creating fresh hope around the globe.

SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

